

Thematic Literary Essay
“A Mother in Mannville” by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings
A Formal, Five-Paragraph Essay

Revise the in-class timed thematic essay. It should be double-spaced using 12 point font.
Due _____

Explain a theme in the story and examine ideas and information from the selection that prove it worthy. Provide three cited references that support the chosen theme. Keep the 6 +1 traits of writing in mind: Ideas, organization, sentence fluency, word choice, voice, conventions, and presentation. Do not retell the story. Refer to events, instances, or details in the story that support the thesis.

Introduction:

- Name the title and author. After naming the author the first time, use just the author's last name. Never refer to important people by only the first name in a formal essay.
- Briefly describe something about the story that leads to the theme.
- The theme should be stated clearly as the thesis, the last sentence of the introduction.

Body Paragraphs (3):

- Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that supports the thesis (theme). Quotes do not make very good topic sentences.
- Exact text should be referenced to support the topic sentence. Dialogue used as quoted support is awkward and often fails to give clear, specific support for the thesis. Place the reference in the middle or near the end of the paragraph. Include the page number after the quotation within parentheses, thus called a parenthetical reference, and place the closing period after the final parenthesis. There is no punctuation inside the quote unless it is special, a question mark or exclamation point.

Example: “The human mind scatters its interests as though made of thistledown, and every wind stirs and moves it” (64).

- Explain the idea clearly. Lead into the next paragraph's idea with the paragraph's concluding sentence.

Conclusion:

- Restate the thesis/theme in the first sentence, but change the wording so that it is not the same as the introductory thesis.
- Summarize the main ideas presented in the essay.
- End with a final statement that will impact the reader. Never underestimate the power of a short, declarative sentence. When used with sentence variety, the short, declarative sentence can offer a concluding punch that the reader will remember.

- ✓ I can write explanatory texts to examine a theme and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
- ✓ I can introduce a theme clearly, previewing what is to follow, and organize ideas.
- ✓ I can develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen quotations, specific details, and examples.
- ✓ I can use appropriate and varied transitions to create unity and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- ✓ I can use precise language and literary terms to explain the topic.
- ✓ I can establish and maintain a formal style.
- ✓ I can provide a conclusion that supports the explanation presented

Formal Style/Language Usage:

- Third person point of view (the voice of authority) – No I, we, us, or you
- Elevate word choice – No slang or informal conversational phrasing (colloquialisms) – Use mother instead of mom.
- No contractions – Ex: should have, rather than should've (never should of)
- Avoid overused words such as a lot (always two words), very, and so.
- Literature is timeless. Use present tense verbs consistently when referring to it.
- Pronouns should agree with their antecedents. (**Pronouns** is the antecedent for **their** in this sentence.) A person is singular and his pronoun should be singular. Consider changing the subject to plural to alleviate awkwardness.
- North Muskegon students are always expected to use proper conventions such as capitalization, complete sentences, and punctuation. If basic skills are used consistently by students, style and content can be better developed.

Scoring:

- In-class essay: 25 points – 5 points for each paragraph (will not factor into grade)
- Revision: 100 points based on the information listed above.

Submit the in-class draft along with the revised draft by _____.